

Executive Officer's Statement

March 20, 2008

- **"Justice for Victims. Justice for All."**

"Justice for Victims. Justice for All" is this year's theme for National Crime Victims' Rights Week, April 13-19. During the past decades there has been great progress in ensuring the rights of victims. Every state and the federal government has established statutory rights for victims and to date 33 states have amended their constitutions to protect those rights.

In California, the first victim compensation program in the nation was established in 1965 and since then we have provided more than \$1.7 billion to victims. California was the first to establish a hospital-based sexual assault treatment center, the first victim assistance program and the first domestic violence shelter. Voters have also supported victims' rights by passing propositions such as 1982's Proposition 8 that established a Victims' Bill of Rights, and 2006's Proposition 83, "Jessica's Law," that established the toughest sex offender law in the nation. Governor Schwarzenegger has approved measures that protect victims, increase public safety and expand restitution collections.

Despite these advances there is much more that we can do to serve victims of crime more effectively. California's Victim Compensation Program is committed to working with our partners in victim services, law enforcement professionals, prosecutors, corrections and probation officers, and healthcare professionals to help victims rebuild their lives. We can help victims better understand their rights, negotiate the criminal justice system and access needed services. As we're reminded by Martin Luther King's comment: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

- **Victims' March on the Capitol**

The Victim Compensation and Government Claims Board (VCGCB) and other victim service providers will show their solidarity with crime victims at the Victims' March on the Capitol. This 19th annual event will be held midday on April 16 on the west steps of the State Capitol, highlighted by the moving testimonials of crime victims and survivors.

- **Local Events, Vigils and Ceremonies**

Community focused organizations throughout California will be marking Victims' Rights Week with local events. The VCGCB has published a calendar of these special events along with other resources on our website.

- **Board Ribbons Highlight Activities Statewide**

In an annual tradition that supports the victim community statewide, the VCGCB is distributing thousands of Victims' Rights Week ribbons and other materials to organizations in every California county.

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Justice for ALL
VICTIMS

Justice for ALL Victims

- **Missing Persons Conference Aids Search for Solutions**

The VCGCB is honored to be among the sponsors joining victims, advocates, victim-service and law enforcement agencies in the first Missing Persons conference of its kind in California during Victims' Rights Week. "Missing Persons: Information Resources and Hope" will be held Thursday, April 17, in the Lecture Hall at McGeorge School of Law in Sacramento. This all-day conference will focus on resources that can help prevent and resolve missing-person cases. Other sponsors are: the Governor's Office; the Attorney General's (AG's) Office of Victim Services; the AG's Missing Persons and Unidentified Persons Unit; the Office of Emergency Services; and the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's Office of Victim and Survivor Rights and Services.

- **Missing Children Reward Program**

One of the state resources that can help bring missing children home is the Board's Missing Children Reward Program. Funds are available to reward persons with up to \$500 for providing information which leads to the recovery of a missing child listed in the California Department of Justice Missing Children Registry. We are taking the opportunity of Victims' Rights Week and the Missing Persons Conference to publicize this program.

- **DNA/Cold Case Summit**

We are also pleased to be a sponsor of an event that will help law enforcement help victims and their families: the DNA/Cold Case Summit on April 24 in Sacramento. The summit will also feature expert speakers and a showcase of the newest strategies and latest technologies for investigating and prosecuting cold cases. It is hosted by the California District Attorneys Association, with support from the California Police Chiefs Association, California State Sheriffs' Association, and the California Crime Victims Assistance Association.

Awareness Campaign

The VCGCB participated, or will participate, in the following events and meetings:

- "Discover the Connections! Bridging Strategies to Prevent Child Injury and Maltreatment," a Sacramento conference sponsored by the California Department of Public Health, California Department of Social Services and Center for Injury Prevention Policy and Practice at San Diego State University.
- California Police Chiefs Association Annual Conference in Fresno.
- Sponsor and exhibitor at the Cyber Safe California Summit in Burbank, presented by the California State and Consumer Services Agency, Department of Consumer Affairs and Office of Privacy Protection.
- Alliance of California Law Enforcement's 16th annual Legislative Day in Sacramento
- Provider Outreach Forums for mental-health professional who service crime victims, in San Jose, Livermore, Sacramento, Los Angeles, Chico, Oroville and Redding.